

Welcome to the 13th District of Texas

Introduction

Just like there's nothing small about Texas, there's nothing small about the 13th Congressional District. It's one of the largest districts in the State, and one of the largest in the Nation.

Larger than 11 states and covering over 30,000 square miles and all or part of 44 counties, the 13th District of Texas encompasses the Texas Panhandle and stretches between the Oklahoma and New Mexico borders, winds across the Panhandle into the South Plains north of Lubbock, then runs east across the Red River Valley through Wichita Falls.

In addition to being one of the largest congressional districts in America geographically, the 13th District is also a leader in many other areas of importance to both the State of Texas and the United States.

Cattle, Crops, & Oil

The Ranching industry plays an important role in the 13th District. A large portion of the United States fed cattle are fed in 13th and 19th Districts -- one of the largest concentration of fed cattle production in the country. The 13th District is also home to one of the Nation's oldest and largest cattle auctions, located in Amarillo just minutes from downtown.

The 13th District farmers are national leaders in growing such crops as wheat and corn, and world leaders in growing seed milo, accounting for -- when combined with farmers from the neighboring 19th Congressional District -- 90 percent of the world's production in this area.

Even though the boom years of the 1980s are past, Texas remains the nation's leader in oil and gas exploration and production. Much of this activity is centered in the 13th District. In fact, the 13th District is one of the top ten natural gas producing districts in the country. It's also home to the world's largest supply of crude helium.

Route 66 & the Famous Mineral Water

The 13th District is also home to some of the most recognizable cultural landmarks of the last 40 years.

Leading the way is one of the most famous roads in the world -- Route 66. Memorialized in song and on TV, Route 66 is a road that defined America in the 1950s, and a symbol of that era today. It's also something people can experience for themselves by driving a classic stretch of the classic highway that cuts across the Panhandle from the town of Shamrock to the city of Amarillo.

The discovery of what appeared to be medicinal qualities in the water made the city of Mineral Wells nationally famous in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. In 1877, James Alvis Lynch settled in a Texas valley 48 miles West of Fort Worth. He dug a well for drinking water but then discovered the water had "healing powers" which cured his wife's rheumatism. And so he named the valley Mineral Wells. Word quickly spread through out the country about the remedial mineral water. After the completion of the first passenger train in 1891, thousands of health-seeking-drinkers began to travel annually to Mineral Wells.

In 1929, the Baker Hotel was built to offer therapeutic baths and massages to the many visitors. T.B. Baker, a wealthy hotel businessman, spent \$1.2 million dollars to build the famous 450 room hotel. Some the famous names to appear on the Baker Hotel guest list include Judy Garland, Clark Gable, the Three Stooges, Lyndon Johnson and Lady Bird, Will Rogers, Marlene Dietrich, Mary Martin, General Pershing, Dorothy Lamour, Jean Harlow, Sammy Kaye, Jack Dempsey, Helen Keller, and Ronald Reagan.

The 13th District is home to many other cultural icons, landmarks and events. The Paul Newman movie Hud was filmed in Claude, while the closing sunset in the movie Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade was filmed in the same area. Bruce Springsteen found the inspiration for one of his best known songs at the Cadillac Ranch, which is located just outside of Amarillo.

The 13th District is also the site of one of the best known and most challenging bike races in the Nation -- the "Hotter 'N Hell Hundred," which takes place in Wichita Falls every August and attracts bicyclists from all over the world.

Ranches, Rodeos & a Rich Western Heritage

The 13th District is also the home of famed rancher and Texas Ranger Charles Goodnight, who invented the chuck wagon and was the inspiration for a character in Lonesome Dove and another one of Larry McMurtry's novels, Streets of Laredo.

The spirit of Charles Goodnight is alive and well in the 13th District today, and can be found in a variety of events and activities held throughout the year. Whether it's attending an evening performance of the internationally acclaimed musical drama, Texas, held outdoor at Palo Duro Canyon near Amarillo, enjoying the Texas Ranch Roundup in Wichita Falls, or watching one of the many rodeos held in cities and towns throughout the area, the 13th District has a rich, western heritage for everyone to experience and enjoy.

That rich western heritage can also be found at any of the many working ranches which are located throughout the area. The 13th District is home to some of the biggest ranches in the United States, including the 6666 ("Four Sixes") ranch in Carson and King Counties, the Pitchfork Ranch in King County, and the Waggoner ranch, which is located in King and Wilbarger Counties and is the largest contiguous ranch in the State of Texas. The 13th District is also home to the JA Ranch in Armstrong and Donley Counties, which was founded by Charles Goodnight in the 1870s is still in operation.

Finally, the 13th District is where Quanah Parker, the last great war Chief of the Comanches lived with his tribe in the

late 1800s and where a town bearing his name can be found today.

Defending Democracy & the Red, White & Blue

In the 13th District there are two pillars of the U.S. military establishment which helped America win the Cold War and are continuing to help us keep the peace today.

Located just outside of Wichita Falls is Sheppard Air Force Base. In operation since before World War II, Sheppard now employs and trains over 13,000 men and women. It's home to the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Training Program (ENJJPT), which trains pilots from Germany, Spain, Belgium and NATO's other member countries. It's also home to aircraft maintenance, health care, dental, and other inter-service instructional schools. With these different missions, Sheppard has become a critical link in the U.S. national security chain.

The Pantex Plant is located in the center of the District about 17 miles northeast of Amarillo. Started as a munitions factory at the outset of World War II, Pantex was acquired by the old Atomic Energy Commission in 1951 and transformed into the nation's only nuclear weapons assembly and disassembly facility. It's mission a secret until 1991, the Pantex Plant remains one of the unsung heroes of the past 40 years. With its mission now geared toward taking weapons apart and keeping our nuclear arsenal safe, secure and reliable, Pantex is assured of playing a vital and continuing role in our nation's security well into the 21st century.

Colleges, Universities & Schools of Higher Learning

The 13th District takes great pride in the fact that it's home to seven outstanding colleges, universities, and schools of higher learning.

These schools include: Amarillo College in Amarillo; Clarendon College in Clarendon; Frank Phillips College in Borger; Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls; North Central Texas College - Bowie Campus in Bowie; Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at Amarillo ; Vernon College in Vernon; and West Texas A&M University in Canyon.